

CATS NEWSLETTER



The Official Journal of the Capital Area Timex/Sinclair Users Group

PRESIDENTIAL RAMBLINGS

STOP

This is my last Ramblings. I have decided to resign my presidency effective immediately. The reason is quite simple - I do not have enough time to give CATS the attention it expects of its president. Among other things, I have been promoted at work and it is taking up much more of my time than it usually does!

I want to thank many of you who have worked tirelessly on CATS activities and have contributed to its success. I hesitate to name people because I am sure to leave someone out, but I want to especially thank the officers - past and present, the other members of the Executive Board, the people that worked tirelessly and unselfishly to make the Capital Fest a smashing success, people who have made outstanding presentations at the meetings, written articles for the newsletter and the newsletter editor himself.

Speaking of Vernon, he has told me that he has written a column/letter somewhere else in this newsletter in his own inimitable style that addresses his concerns about CATS. I have not read it (and it certainly did not affect my decision to resign), but I know that two of the things that he intends to talk about is communication within the club (both horizontally and vertically) and support for the newsletter by writing articles. These are both very important issues and are important to the future of our club.

I will miss working with all of you but I will look forward to remaining an active member of CATS.

Bill

PROGRAM REVIEW

The 2068:A System Overview

Past, Present, and Future
by Hank Dickson

JOE W. MILLER, longtime CATS member, Corresponding Secretary, and curator of the CATS tape library, was the main speaker at the October meeting. His topic revolved around the capabilities of the ever-surprising Timex/Sinclair 2068 color computer. Joe's presentation was well-organized, informative, and conveyed a keen historical insight into the saga behind this little machine. Following is a digest of some of the points Joe made. Sadly, the newsletters announcing this event were not mailed until after the meeting, so a prime event may have slipped by many members.

JOE'S OBSERVATIONS: By Joe W. Miller

Possibly the saddest item in this chronology and the one which contributed the most to the demise of the 2068 was the inopportune timing of the release of the T/S 1500. The market was already beginning to be flooded by low-end home computers. Adding another entry only served to confuse the public and dilute Timex's already chaotic marketing efforts. In the long run, the results might have been the same, but the 2068 should have been given a fighting chance at the start.

On a happier note, there's a lot of truth to the statement that adding a floppy disk drive to a 2068 turns it into a real computer. Of the 3rd party interfaces (I/F's) around today for the

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NOVEMBER MEETING AGENDA

- 11:00** Pascal Workshop with
Deane Parker
Hardware Workshop
2:00 General Meeting
2:30 Program Planning for
1990
presented by George Rey
4:30 Adjourn

Please Remember

Members are requested to utilize on-street parking or the Brent School lot (immediately behind the library lot). Library patrons need the library lot.

KEY DATES

NOVEMBER

- 4 General Meeting
23 THANKSGIVING
24 December N/L
DEADLINE

DECEMBER

- 9 General Meeting
Note the EARLY November
meeting date

Coming in December: THE Q&R
Exchange & Christmas Party.
DON'T MISS IT

from the editor...

Well, here it is, time to get another issue of the newsletter out the door. Not to be overly pessimistic but I'm not sure how many more issues we will make. Perhaps I should change the "we" in the last sentence to "I". Maybe you haven't been following the newsletter closely, so let me refresh your memory.

Over a year ago, I wrote that I felt like our newsletter shouldn't be a clipping service but should support itself, mainly, by articles submitted by the members. I wasn't against including articles from other newsletters that members picked as being of interest to the membership. I objected to MY having to select the articles for the following reasons:

1. While I might select topics that interested me, it would be more meaningful if others picked them to cover a diversity of interests.

2. As I became more involved with dtp, clipping and pasting became somewhat of a bother. That is why I requested that, at the very minimum, articles submitted by authors using QLs should be on floppy disk or microdrive. Also, true electronic dtp doesn't use "paste up" in the traditional sense. In short, I get my kicks producing the newsletter ON A COMPUTER.

Lately, putting out an issue has been more difficult than ever before. Why? Because, fewer and fewer articles are submitted. Lets face it, I take care of the back page, the ad page (page 11), page 2, the top half of page one, and some additional boilerplate. Sometimes I even write an article. All the members have to do is take out their trusty quills and fill the remaining 7 or 8 pages. Regulars like Hank Dickson and Mark Fisher continue to submit articles almost every month on a variety of topics. I am deeply grateful to them.

The dtp contest

As I indicated in the September editorial, I had entered the August and September issues in the CURRENT NOTES-WAACE dtp contest. I'm sorry to say that we didn't win. Didn't even take second. Placed

third behind two menus. Yes, you read that correctly, menus for a Chinese restaurant and a Western grill. How humiliating. Wait till next year.

More dtp

Last month I promised to print "Act II" of the Professional Publisher saga, where I answer the comments Digital Precision made to my article in Quanta. Luckily, Doug Dewey was up from North Carolina and gave me the latest copy of Professional Publisher and the latest edition of graFix, which is the 24 pin printer driver used by ProPub. Various other duties have kept me from really delving into the program and I want to be absolutely sure I check out all the points DP made in their letter. I hope to have this article ready for the next issue.

Combined campaign for the N/L

Right now the big word-around town is the "Combined Campaign", the annual funds drive for the various area charities. I would like you to consider making a contribution to the newsletter at the same time that you make one to the CFC. The N/L contribution won't cost you a thing and you can see the results immediately.

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Submissions to the newsletter should conform to the following criteria:

Column width no greater than 2 3/8". QL users should submit their articles on a microdrive cartridge or floppy disk. TS 1000 and 2068 based articles should be hard copy. All authors should consider sending their articles to the newsletter via the CATS BBS, (301) 588-0579.

Our mailing address is:
CATS
P.O. Box 467
Fairfax Station, VA 22039

POTPOURRI

NEWS AROUND THE BELTWAY

QUAD DENSITY DRIVES LOOKING FOR OWNERS

TOM ROBBINS, longtime CATS



member from Pikesville, MD, recently ran across a fantastic deal at a computer vendor show in Baltimore. A distributor from the New York City area was displaying brand new Mitsubishi quaddensity (720 Kb) floppy disk drives for the incredible price of \$25 each (plus shipping). Tom learned that for a CATS-type "group-buy", the shipping costs could be as low as \$1 per unit, compared to \$5 if bought individually. Tom has one of the drives running on his QL. He can provide members with the spec's needed to make this standard 5.25" drive run with any Sinclair product. If you're interested, he can be reached at home at 1-301-877-3700. Also, he will be making final arrangements for this particular buy at the November 4 meeting, where all the financial and technical details will be available.

REPLACEMENTSUGHTS FOR GEORGE REY

For over two years, CATS vice president GEORGE REY has been putting together a superb series of speakers and presentations for the group's monthly meetings.

Now he finds he must step down from his stint during which he served as a programmer's programmer. If you would like to be a candidate for this job for the 1990 season, or know someone else who would, please call George at home at (Metro) 262-2968.

George plans to be around for some time and says he will be available to be a consultant during the early part of next year.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Sat., Nov. 4 Planning Workshop
for 1990
Led by George Rey

Sat., Dec. 9 Libraries for
Sinclair computers
CATS Holiday
celebration

PASCAL WORKSHOPS CONTINUE

DUANE PARKER, the CATS guru of all things Pascal, has announced he will be able to continue with his series of workshops on using the Pascal language on the QL. This news was received with sincere joy at the October meeting. The series will pick up with Lesson 6 at 11 a.m. Saturday, November 4 in the New Carrollton library. It will operate in the large meeting room while the hardware group meets in the small conference room. All past and future participants are urged to bring their accustomed array of QL paraphernalia, networking cables, power strips,



reading lamps, and the like. Duane says an EPROM will not be necessary, since he has a new Pascal compiler which eliminates the need for one. For questions, contact Duane at home at: 1-301-285-2799.

Happy Thanksgiving



THE WAY I SEE IT

News And Notes by Vernon Smith

I've decided to try to get back into the swing of writing a monthly column, a la "QL on the QT", rather than combine the administrative chores of the Editorial Page with my own feelings and observations. Now to please the purists in the group:

THE FOLLOWING IS SOLELY THE OPINION OF THE AUTHOR AND NOT THAT OF CATS OR THE CATS EXECUTIVE BOARD.

NEST? NETS? A new group

I had a long talk with Peter Hale. I'm sure most of you remember Peter from the Fest. What he can get the Abacus spreadsheet to do is simply amazing. Well, Peter says that the Boston Timex/Sinclair group now affiliated with the Boston Computer Society will be splitting off and going it alone around the first of the year. It seems that the basic philosophy (MS-DOS) of the BCC just didn't mesh with the Sinclair types. They will be forming NEST, New England Sinclair Timex. I sort of think they ought to call their group, NETS, and give it a regional flair.

As I mentioned last month, Peter is the author of Tax-I-QL. For those people that reserve their copy of Tax-I-QL prior to the end of November, they can get the "early bird special" price of \$19.95. EMsoft, P.O. Box 8763, Boston, MA 02114-0830.

EMsoft has also been appointed the exclusive North American distributor for text87, the full featured word processor for the QL. Peter indicated that his price includes 2 hours of consulting time, something I wish were available with many software packages I've seen. Since most (all?) QL software is born and bred across the pond, telephone consultation can get rather expensive, despite what AT&T and MCI says. Since Peter is in Boston, talking with a guru doesn't require hocking the family jewels. In the near future, I'll try to have another review of the latest version of text87.

Z88

Uncle Clive's little laptop is selling quite briskly in the Macintosh market. I've seen ads for it in all of the Mac magazines as a perfect way to store data while you are away from your desk. Watch Uncle Clive closely. He is always out ahead of the pack in the practical applications of the new technologies. Guess what the new Atari pocket computer, the Portfolio, uses for data storage? You got it, EPROMS. Want a laugh? Listen to their ads and you will think that they were the first to do so.

Emulators—Old and new

First there was the MS-DOS emulator, The Solution, and now there is one for the Mac. The Solution is SLOO-OOOW just as PC Ditto is on the Atari. That's one drawback of the software based emulators. Not much info right now on the Mac emulator and it will be interesting to see if it will actually read Mac disks, seeing that they have an altogether different recording scheme. If anyone has any more info, let me know.

Time Designs—Gone with the wind?

Tim Woods, aka Mr. Time Designs, surfaced at the CapitalFest, passed out the "latest" edition of his magazine, assured everyone that he was in for the long haul, and promptly dropped out of sight again. Seems that now he's established a BBS but people leaving messages never get replies. No one can get him on the phone either. He's been paid by some software distributors for advertising but hasn't delivered the ads or refunded the money. Most of the comments in the newsletters I've read say, "Where's Tim?" but some still say to forgive and give him another (?) chance. Personally, I feel that we already have and he blew it. We've been through this before with TS Horizons. I think most of us would welcome an honest assessment by Tim of his situation and if it comes down to having to fold, do it. Return the

money owed and close up shop; thereby gaining everyone's respect. That's certainly better than dragging things out, as they are now being done.

SNUG

Last year when SNUG was testing the water to see if they could make a go of it, I made some very downbeat comments. At our Fest they were supposed to get organized but none of the original organizers showed up. I am still of the opinion that it is still a group promising much and delivering little. They are supposed to have a large software library, but I would like to see them get out a press release to all the newsletters and let us know EXACTLY what they have to offer. What additional benefits can I get from SNUG that I don't already have? For those of us that can attend regular meetings of an established group, I expect that they can do no more than is done locally. For those living too far away, I wonder if SNUG is providing even as much as a group like CATS could, since we publish a newsletter and, so far, SNUG doesn't. OK, SNUG, I've had my say, now it's your turn.

dtp-QL style

How many of you are interested in desktop publishing? I am wondering if anyone wants me to conduct some Saturday morning workshops to explore the boundaries of dtp using the QL. I'll be the first to admit that I've probably just scratched the surface. Perhaps, together, we could increase our knowledge and capabilities. Why doesn't someone suggest some practical problems for us to solve since it is always more meaningful to work on real world examples. Let me know.

Spectrum software

For those of you that think I concentrate exclusively on the QL, think again. I have a 2068 with a twister

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This is an open letter to the Executive Board

On September 27th, I left a message on the CATS BBS asking for information I needed PRIOR to the November newsletter deadline. I was hoping that the BBS would be a centralized, convenient place for newsletter info and articles and that at least the Executive Board would use it. From the lack of a response, perhaps I was wrong. I'm not sure whether this is indicative of the use the Executive Board makes of the BBS or the attitude of the Board toward the production of the newsletter; however, to me it indicates apathy and that isn't good. I've got my hands full putting out the N/L (remember, I'm a part-timer, too) so anything you could do, individually or collectively, would be appreciated.

At the very least, you could write something for the newsletter. With the exception of Mark Fisher, Hank Dickson, and Barry Washington, I don't have any n/l articles from Board members. If it is the desire of the membership to keep the N/L going with "home-brewed" material, then we need some "home brew". You could, as a very minimum, write something about your particular functional area. We should have minutes of the Executive Board meetings, Treasurer's reports, and summaries of correspondence received, news about the libraries, etc. The newsletter, if it contained such information, would truly be "official journal" of the group. A second suggestion would be to get a modem and get active on the BBS. With the advent of a 1200 baud capability, there is no need for a modadapter. If the Board doesn't set an example, how can we get more people interested in using the BBS?

Basically, we have a communications problem, among the Board and between the Board and the general membership. To meet the challenges of the next few years (increasingly older machines and a shrinking pool of potential members), we will have to be skillful at communicating externally; however, we need to raise the level of internal communication, before we take our show on the road.

It is up to the Board to set an example for the group to follow. I know you can do it.

Vernon

The Way I See It-From Page 4

board and a DISCiple disk interface so that my son can run Spectrum software. I try to follow the Spectrum software scene, at least as it pertains to games—which is the primary use of the Spectrum in the UK. I recently received the Christmas edition of the SpeedySoft catalog. If you're interested in getting genuine UK software let me know and I'll bring the catalog to the meeting.

That's all, folks

If you have any comments, pro or con, want to suggest a future topic, or just chew the fat, give me a call at (703) 978-1835 or leave a message on the BBS. I read AND answer my mail.

PRINTED FOR SALE

SAM LEFKOV, former charter member of CATS, dropped by the October meeting to visit old friends and announce he has a printer in excellent working condition for sale. It is a GEMINI 10X, 80-column, 9-pin dot matrix printer, which uses a parallel Centronics cable. The asking price is \$100, but reasonable offers will also be considered by Sam. He can be reached at home at:
(Metro) 422-1832.

Vol.5 No.3, surprisingly won't be far behind.

Later.

— QuickBBS v2.04

* Origin: —[*] The Bull Pen

[*]= <=Sinclair Users

Unite! => (1:105/204)

...(thought you might be interested...Phx Pete...)

MESSAGES FROM THE BBS

From: Phoenix Pete
Re: MacPaint reader for QL

A collaboration of Don Walterman in Detroit and Jim Cook in LA has produced a program to decode and/or print "MacPaint" picture files on the QL. It was originally written in SuperBASIC and then TURBO'd for maximum speed. The software runs fine. It will be released soon, once appropriate DOC file is produced. Phoenix Pete

To: All
From: Gerald:Lindsay;
Re: Z88

The ZED-88 BBS (703-968-9438) is having a Z88 programming contest. Grand prize is your choice of a 128K EPROM or RAM Cartridge. Check the board for full details. All are welcome.

Gerald

I took the following message from Phoenix Pete (Fisher) off our BBS. Is the Tim Woods/TIME DESIGNS corpse rising from the dead? Who knows. Stay tuned..film at 11.

10-12-89

To: All

From: Phoenix Pete
Re: TDM back again!

LOOK:

Message #1707 "SINCLAIR"

Date: 11-Oct-89 03:09

From: Tim Woods

To: All

I may have solved my "phone problems". I have put online the TIME DESIGNS BBS. It is based on Cas-board for now (300 baud; setting 8/1/n). This board is a simple message-posting board (no downloads or anything like that yet). And by no means am I trying to compete with really good professional BBS like this one. Since I am unable to man my phone lines...I think this may be the answer. Go ahead and try us out sometime (let me know what you think): (503) 824-2658 For all Timex Sinclair type systems. Tim Woods
P.S. Vol.5 No.2 is now being mailed this week (of TIME DESIGNS) and

Continued on column to the left

Tabloid Catalog Review: John's Picks

Published by Microcomputer Applications

P.O. Box E, Suisun, CA 94585 (707) 422-1465

\$5.00/3 issues

by Mark Fisher

A few months back I wrote of several books that reached into various areas of microcomputer interest. My recent reading list has centered on other areas, but I received the above tabloid in the mail a few weeks ago. As part of the annual Christmas snowfall of catalogs that keeps the Post Office in business, John's Picks stands out as a unique and thorough source of books on the current cutting edge of science.

All CATS members have a more than average interest in the engineering side of life. A large percentage ARE engineers, while almost all others have some background in the hard sciences. For such a person, catalogs such as Lillian Vernon have little appeal. But what about a catalog that lists 14 books on chaos on one page?

John's Picks is such a catalog. Most products are books - but there are IBM programs prints, CD's, and various knick knacks as well. Subjects covered include Escher, Chaos, Fractals, Quantum Mechanics, MIDI, parallel processing, graphics, and hardware design (for starters). Each item is given a short review/blurb, which includes a warning if the book requires advanced knowledge to be of interest.

In short, I'd recommend this catalog to anyone that wants to know what the current range of activity is out on the fringes of science. Even without buying anything, the short reviews of an incredible spectrum of speculation are rewarding. If you've found yourself slowly leafing through the BNF Enterprises catalog, you'll LOVE this one!

The 2068 was (and still is) quite a machine

Continued from Page 1

2068 (Aerco, Olliger, Larken), I believe the Larken has the hands-down edge. The Larken does not pull power out of the 2068 the way the Aerco does. Also, the Olliger interface can be connected to the Larken board and the user can switch back and forth between the two. The Larken I/F uses no RAM in the computer. It is a small board and comes in two parts—one attaches to the big port on the back of the computer, and the other goes into the game cartridge dock. This I/F features the uninterrupted transfer of data. Even today, the 2068 is an attractive computer, and one which I personally use a lot. I also have a DOS machine at home, but with my years of experience with the 2068, it is the one I prefer to use. I think this machine is going to be around a long time, and I think we would do well to spend our time learning how to truly use it effectively. To this end, I would like to propose a 2068 special interest group which would meet monthly at

the same time as the hardware group, but in a different room. Watch for announcements activating the November/December special interest group meetings. Always of concern, especially with a machine that is no longer manufactured, is parts availability and maintenance. One of the better repair shops for 2068's is run by RON ELLIOTT in Cabool, a famous town in the gently rolling hills of southern Missouri, close by the colorful Ozark Mountains. He does "mod's" capably, including internal power supply replacements. Maintenance and repair of the 2068's becomes increasingly critical with the passage of time. It seems that if a CATS member has a 2068 at all, he probably has three. We all need to pool our knowledge and experience to keep all of those average three up and running!

(NOTE: Joe Miller finished up his presentation with some demonstrations using his "modded" 2068, his Skip Fisher RGB monitor, and Sam

THE RISE AND FALL OF THE T/S2068 COMPUTER

May '83 First inking of 20XX received by PGZUG (a predecessor of CATS).

The description:

A color computer
72K RAM
Sound
A real keyboard
\$199.95 for 72K version
\$149.95 for 40K version
July '83 Timex drops 40K version
Repeatable keys a reality
16 graphics characters are announced, but never appear (vaporized)
Keys each have 4 operations, just like T/S 1000
Read/Data/Restore functions are added
High resolution color is featured
Aug. '83 "Timex 2000" floated as a possible name
Sep. '83 Presented to the US market as the "T/S 2068"
More than 8 colors
29 line/64 character screen
Improved save/load capabilities
Plug-in cartridge dock
Built-in clock (vaporized)
A-wide 38912 sound chip (vaporized)
Bank-switching (for real)
Six edge connectors in rear
RGB output
Dual display (up to 80 characters)
Hefty 1-amp power supply
Sep. '83 At almost the same time, Timex announces the T/S 1500
Feb. '84 After only six months of promoting the 2068, Timex leaves the US retail market
Late '84 Quantum Leap (QL) computers announced

Lefkov's giant color TV. He showed the loading and saving of programs from cartridge tape to floppy disk, and the execution of software from both media. He demonstrated a graphics program (Planet Finder), Vu-File, and M-Script. Everything worked admirably.—
C.H.D.)

THE CLASSIFIEDS



Order Now! Then Watch Your Mail!

THAT'S RIGHT!

Now you can get the RMG CATALOG on LKDOS DISK in TASWORD 2 files. This format for the 2068 will be the only format available and at the same old price of only:

\$3.00 PP

AND THERE'S MORE!!!

We now offer our monthly mailers on the same format disk! Keep up with what's new, used equipment and SUPER BUYS! AS AN EXTRA BONUS YOU WILL GET AT LEAST 3 PUBLIC DOMAIN S/W ITEMS FOR THE LKDOS SYSTEM PER YEAR! This alone is worth more than the \$12 per year subscription price!

(COUPONS INCLUDED WITH BOTH PACKS)



RMG ENTERPRISES

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OREGON CITY, OREGON 97045
503/655-7484 * NOON-10 TUE-SAT



ADVERTISING INFORMATION:

CATS will run one free 1/4 page "commercial" ad per year for each full (\$18) membership. Noncommercial ads may be submitted at any time. Publication dates for both types will be determined by the Newsletter Editor.

ADVERTISING RATES:

Full page, \$25; 1/2 page, \$15; 1/4 page, \$10; 2" X 2", \$7. Multiple month plans are also available.

Editorial-Continued from Page 2

I'll bet that your pet charity can't make that statement.

Thank you Hank and Mark

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Hank Dickson and Mark Fisher for all of the support they have given me. Month after month, they write article after article; thereby insuring my sanity.

Speaking of the BBS

The BBS is really a neat right into the newsletter. Those of you that are still

using microdrive cartridges, realize that they are in short supply and are loath to let them get out of your sight. Here is the perfect way to contribute and never have the cart leave your machine. When the new Kaypro 10 comes on line with 1200 baud capability, we will be able to do some serious up/downloading. Also, the modaptor won't be required at the 1200 right into my Atari dtp program. An article on modifying your modem cable will be in the next issue. Who's going to work a group buy on modems? If we could get tied together electronically, I think it would contribute greatly

toward keeping the group together.

What's inside

Mark Fisher has a book review with a little different twist. This month he looks at a catalog. We have a variety of articles from Hank Dickson, capped by a review of Joe Miller's presentation at last month's meeting. I've downloaded some items I hope will be of interest to you from the BBS. This month I am returning with my columnist's hat on to write on my observations of the Sinclair scene.

I hope that you enjoy the issue.

CATS maintains a gratis exchange of newsletters with approximately 30 Users Groups across the U.S. and Canada. Clubs not sending a newsletter to us for six months are automatically taken off the list.

Immediate Past President Tom Bent
 Newsletter Editor & contact person Vernon Smith (703) 978-1835
 Members-at-Large Phil Russo
 Treasurer Mark Fisher
 Corresponding Secretary Barry Washington
 Recording Secretary Joe Miller
 2nd Vice President Ruth Fegley
 1st Vice President George Rey
 President Hank Dickson
 Bill Barnhart

Executive Board

The Capital Area Timex/Sinclair Users Group
 is a not-for-profit group devoted to serving the interests of those who own, use, or are interested in the Timex/Sinclair family of computers.

CATS BBS: (301) 588-0579, 8-N-1, 300 baud
 News and general information, 24 hours a day.

QZX BBS: (505) 522-7081 FIDO net 15,
 node 6, East Coast dial (703) 547-4815 FIDO net 18, node 9.

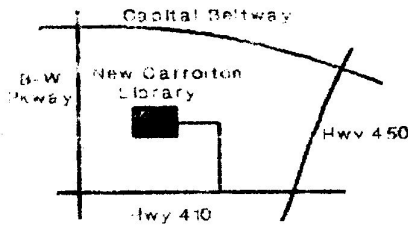
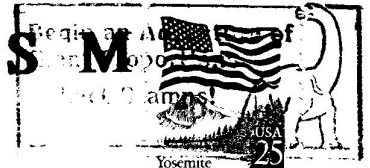
Networks
 Timex SIG on CompuServe: Wednesday night, 10:00 PM Eastern time (GO CLUB).

Newsletter
 Memberships cost \$18 per year, are good for 12 months, and include all privileges (access to libraries, group buys, etc.). A newsletter only subscription is available for persons living outside the Washington Metro area and is \$12.00 per year.

Meetings
 Monthly meetings are held from 11:00 AM to 4:30 PM, on the second Saturday of each month, at the New Carrollton Public Library.

CATS Newsletter
 P.O. Box 467
 Fairfax Station, VA 22039

FIRST CLASS MAIL



The next meeting of CATS will be held on:

Saturday, November 4, 1989 11:00 AM Pascal and Hardware Workshop
 2:00 PM General Meeting

Please note: NOVEMBER MEETING WILL BE ON NOV. 4. <<FIRST>>SATURDAY IN NOVEMBER.

At: New Carrollton Public Library
 7114 Riverdale Road (Hwy 410), New Carrollton, MD

IF YOU ARE NOT A MEMBER OF CATS, THIS IS THE ONLY ISSUE YOU WILL RECEIVE